

## DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

**AMENDMENT DATE:** March 11, 2010  
**POSITION:** Oppose

**BILL NUMBER:** SB 970  
**AUTHOR:** E. Corbett

### **BILL SUMMARY:** Preelection Day Voting

This bill would establish a pilot program that would create early voting polling places at four college campuses, as provided. This bill also would specify requirements for the polling places established, as well as reporting requirements for the impacted county elections officials and the Secretary of State (SOS).

### **FISCAL SUMMARY**

According to the SOS, any costs resulting from the reporting requirement in this bill would be minimal. This bill is likely to result in a reimbursable state-mandated local program by requiring certain county elections officials to establish early voting polling places at college campuses, as specified, and to report to the Legislature and the SOS, as provided. The cost of the potential mandate is not known at this time.

### **COMMENTS**

The Department of Finance is opposed to this bill because it is not necessary and could result in mandate costs (to the General Fund) that are not included in the Administration's current fiscal plan. Existing law already permits counties to set up early voting and to set up polling places on college campuses. By requiring certain county elections officials to set up early voting sites at campuses and to report to the Legislature and the SOS, this bill would likely result in a reimbursable state-mandated local program.

According to the SOS, some counties already use campuses as polling places when it makes sense and works logistically for them, while other counties have tried without success. We note that the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials expresses serious concerns with this measure stating that it would be costly and could lead to confusion, frustration, and disenfranchisement. There are a number of issues that complicate the establishment of early voting sites at campuses. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Many students residing on campus may not be registered to vote in the county where they are attending school. Instead of voting a vote-by-mail ballot from their home county, they may mistakenly vote a provisional ballot at the early voting site (which would not be counted).
- By requiring the early voting sites to serve all voters in the county's jurisdiction, this bill would require poll workers to have all variations of the ballot available at the site, to have the ability to determine each voter's correct version, to locate it, and to issue it to the voter. This would require voluminous amounts of paper ballots that most polling places cannot sufficiently store and would likely result in significant costs to the county. Many counties that offer early voting do so in their offices so that all of the ballot types are readily available.
- It could be difficult and costly to keep vote-related materials secure over a five-day period. At worst, there is potential that the outcome of the election could be compromised.
- Parking at campuses can be limited and costly. This impacts voters who do not attend or work at the campus. These voters may also have difficulty finding the voting place because they are not familiar with the campus.

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Analyst/Principal (0222) J. Fitzpatrick	Date	Assistant Program Budget Manager Nona Martinez	Date
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Department Deputy Director	Date
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Governor's Office:	By:	Date:	Position Approved _____
			Position Disapproved _____

**BILL ANALYSIS** Form DF-43 (Rev 03/95 Buff)

**BILL ANALYSIS/ENROLLED BILL REPORT--(CONTINUED)****Form DF-43****AUTHOR****AMENDMENT DATE****BILL NUMBER**

E. Corbett

March 11, 2010

SB 970

**COMMENTS (Cont'd)**

Current law generally requires voters who wish to vote and who do not cast their ballots by mail to cast their ballot at the appropriate precinct polling place on Election Day.

This bill would establish the Preelection Day Voting Polling Places Pilot Program. Specifically, it would:

- Require the SOS, in conjunction with the county elections officials, to establish preelection day voting polling places on four college campuses in the state (subject to certain conditions), for at least one general election from January 1, 2011, but prior to December 31, 2016.
- Require each campus selected to be an early voting site for any voter residing in the county's jurisdiction and to be open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. during the five business days prior to Election Day and on Election Day.
- Provide that early voting sites for the pilot program may not be established for any election other than a general election.
- Require impacted county elections officials to report to the Legislature and the SOS regarding the election within six months after Election Day, as specified.
- Require the SOS to report to the Legislature regarding the ability to expand the pilot program to other campuses within the state.

The pilot program created by this bill would remain in effect only until December 31, 2016 and, as of that date, would be repealed (unless a later enacted statute deletes or extends that date).

Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)							
	LA	(Dollars in Thousands)							
	CO	PROP							Fund
	RV	98	FC	2009-2010	FC	2010-2011	FC	2011-2012	Code
0890/Secty State	SO	No	-----	No/Minor Fiscal Impact -----					0001
8885/Comm St Mndt	SO	No	-----	See Fiscal Summary -----					0001